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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY FOR NOVEMBER 08, 2006

This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for November 08, 2006. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

#### POLITICAL

RADIKAL / OZGUR GUNDEM: Four ministers from the AKP government, namely Minister of Education, Minister of Health, Minister of Public Works and Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, came to Batman, conducted local studies there, and extended condolences to the people who lost their relatives in the flooding disasters. Ozgur Gundem daily claims that the ministers were met with statements from local people resenting the recent remarks of PM Erdogan about the disaster situation in the southeastern region. Ministers said that the remarks of the premier were misunderstood and they further promised that new houses would be built for people under projects of TOKI (Mass Housing Administration). PM Erdogan, for his part, pledged that the government would allocate all its resources to remedy people's losses from the disaster. PM Erdogan further pointed out that it was not logical to expect everything from the government and that the people should abide by the construction limitations and obtain construction permits from the local administrations to prevent such disasters turning into catastrophes. Meanwhile, CHP prepared a draft law to include Diyarbakir, Batman, Sirnak, Hakkari, Erzurum, Adana, Istanbul and Mersin in a disaster zone.

OZGUR GUNDEM: The daily claims that the government not only failed in declaring the southeastern region a disaster zone because of the flooding, but also it allegedly did not allow the municipalities in the region to collect relief aid and to launch aid campaigns, citing grounds that the municipalities lacked the authority to gather aid. The subgovernors in the region are trying to ensure that any aid be delivered to people through the official crisis desks set up there: Reportedly, the Subgovernor's Office in Mardin sanctioned the aid Mardin's Kiziltepe, while Derik municipalities (DTP) attempted to deliver aid to the victims, and the Subgovernor's Offices in Sirnak pursued the same policy. Moreover, according to the daily, the prime minister reiterated that the situation in the region was being exaggerated and he further cancelled his anticipated trip to the region to November 17 because of the funeral of the former Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit that will take place on Saturday (11/11). Meanwhile in Hakkari's Semdinli district, the dead bodies of two people, who disappeared in the recent flooding that took place there, were found. Hakkari and Yukseкова municipalities launched three-day-long aid campaigns

for the Semdinli district, and Semdinli Municipality distributed water and food to people all through the night. Hakkari Governor, Hakkari Deputy Mayor, Yuksekova Deputy Mayor, DTP Provincial Chairperson and military officials were all ready and present in Semdinli where search efforts were being spared for the missing people.

OZGUR GUNDEM: Ahmet Turk, Chairperson of DTP, who has been currently conducting studies in the areas hit by the disaster, this time, went to Diyarbakir's Bismil district, one of the areas that the flooding affected. Turk said that regional discrimination was taking place in Turkey, people were no longer seeing the Turkish state as embracing them, and the Kurds were no longer expecting anything coming from the Turkish government.

Meanwhile, Diyarbakir Mayor Osman Baydemir made a call to the people to bring whatever they would donate to a (municipality) building located at a park in Diyarbakir. Diyarbakir Municipality also sent one truck of non-perishable food to Diyarbakir's Bismil district. Baydemir also made an announcement that Kayapinar, Baglar, Sur and Yenisehir Municipalities in Diyarbakir and non-governmental organizations were all displaying unified effort and coordination in this time of hardship.

OZGUR GUNDEM: DTP Vice-Chairperson Aysel Tugluk, a DTP official, and Yenisehir District Mayor of Diyarbakir attended a meeting of the Socialist International Council in Chile. DTP delegation later met with the Chilean President Michelle Bachelet at a reception given on occasion of the meeting.

ZAMAN: Mr. Paul Poudade, French Ambassador to Ankara, who has been currently paying visits to local authorities (see press summary for November 7) in the provinces of eastern Mediterranean region, was wearied by questions of journalists related to the Armenian issue, especially during his visit to

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the Hatay Governor.

#### SECURITY

OZGUR GUNDEM: Turkish Armed Forces, which launched a large-scale military operation in rural sections of Siirt's Eruh and Kurtalan districts, extended the operations to include the Pervari district.

ZAMAN: Two PKK militants were killed in the flooding that took place in an area in the Mountain Qandil in the northern Iraq.

#### HUMAN RIGHTS

OZGUR GUNDEM: 400 health sector workers of the Balcali Hopital of the Cukurova University in Adana have been continuing their strike action for about a year now. The workers, who started their protests when four unionist workers were laid off from the hospital a year ago allegedly because of their unionist activities, are demanding an increase in their salaries and betterment of their working conditions.

ZAMAN / RADIKAL / EVRENSEL: A strange exchange that took place between two families revealed the ugly side of the local codes related to 'honor' in Van's Ozalp district. A person, who raped a three-month pregnant woman (22) called S.A., evaded a potential revenge attempt from the woman's family by giving his 16 year old daughter to S.A.'s husband. The local headmen further complicated the situation by gathering a village assembly and forcing S.A. to divorce from her husband to enable marriage between S.A.'s husband and the rapist's daughter. Jandarma, upon learning about the incident, conducted a raid on the village, put the 16 year old girl under state protection, and detained 13 people from the village.

#### ECONOMY

EKSPRES / BOLGE / OZGUR GUNDEM: Chairperson of Chamber of

Agricultural Engineers said that rainfall in the fertile Cukurova region (the fertile agricultural plain of the eastern Mediterranean region) have left decarees of cultivated fields under flood waters, farmers have not been able to harvest cotton and corn crops, and they have faced a 40 to 50 per cent loss because of the products that remained in the fields. Moreover, the farmers were not able to enter the next stage of cultivation when new crops would be planted, because of the mud in the fields; and the farmers would not be able to prepare themselves for the next season. Meanwhile, damage assessment studies on the fields have begun in Adana's Ceyhan district, announced the Ceyhan Subgovernor.

EKSPRES: Gaziantep Chamber of Industry will hold GAPFOOD (Food and Food Technologies Fair) between 9 and 12 November in Gaziantep.

EKSPRES: The free trade agreement between Turkey and Syria has taken effect in both countries, said the State Minister Kursat Tuzmen.

HURRIYET (CUKUROVA): Fourth Cukurova Industry and Commerce Fair will be held between 15 and 19 November in Adana.

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